

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2 SUMMER 2017

# FACES *of* HOPE

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING FOR OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

—  
“HAVE YOU  
BEEN IN A  
TORNADO?”  
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SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

... HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME ...

# They Want to Thank You. So Do I.



You probably have never met Josh and Kelsey Meyer, but they want to thank you. So do I.

Can you imagine being at home in the evening, putting the kids to bed and, within a matter of seconds, your home is literally ripped apart? That's what happened to the Meyer family when a tornado touched down in Perryville earlier this year. They own a home and run a day care business in a structure adjacent

to their home. The tornado destroyed both.

You have been generous with your commitment to help those in need. And you have been consistent with that commitment. Even when the need seems to return again and again, most recently in the form of flooding several months ago.

We never know what life will bring us, what God's plan is for us. What we do know is that He calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

You do that more than most people I know. And I'm asking you to do it again today.

We are working with families who are struggling not because of what they did, but because of something that was done to them. Perhaps it's a natural disaster, or a death in the family, a car accident, or an employer who closes a business with no notice.

We cannot help those neighbors in need without you. We simply cannot. Your support allows us to provide shelter, transportation, medication, beds and much more. Please prayerfully consider giving again.

Because of your compassion for those in need, our Vincentians who live in Perryville, who were hit by the tornado themselves, were working so hard to help their neighbors even as they themselves needed help. They did it because your support inspires them, and God calls them to serve.

We are humbled by your love of our mission, and John and Kelsey will be able to stay out of poverty because of you. Thank you!

John P. Foppe  
Executive Director



## A Note From the American Red Cross

"The American Red Cross provides immediate and compassionate care to those affected by disasters. With St. Vincent de Paul, we assist individuals and families recovering from disasters small and large, including house fires, the Perryville tornado and the more recent Missouri Floods. **We are grateful for the strong partnership that helps our neighbors rebuild their lives from those first hours through the long journey to recovery. St. Vincent de Paul helps so many of our neighbors on their journey to reclaiming their lives.**"

Cindy Erickson, Chief Executive Officer,  
American Red Cross of Eastern MO



**American  
Red Cross**

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“I had confidence  
it would be used in  
the right way”



**When Father Timothy Elliott became pastor of the archdiocese’s first new parish in 25 years,** he immediately noticed the need. “We were getting calls and people were coming to the parish asking for help,” remembers Father Elliott. “There’s a lot of people moving out and building new homes where we are located (between Dardenne Prairie and Wentzville), but we also see many people who don’t have much. They are looking for help.”

That’s why he asked a group of parishioners to create a Society of St. Vincent de Paul Conference in his parish after they had moved into their permanent Church. He had been a regular donor to SVdP for many years.

“The first reason is that I felt that the money was going to the local area,” said Father Elliott. “I had confidence that it would really be used in the right way, to help those who are in need.”

In fact, when the tornado hit Perryville, St. Gianna’s SVdP Conference donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Conference in Perryville to help those neighbors recover from the storm damage.

As the St. Gianna Conference continued to grow, both in size and its ability to help others, Father Elliott also noticed something else that confirmed his commitment to give.

“One of the things that impressed me about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was to see how much it’s based on faith,” said Father Elliott. “It’s not just a social

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“I give because my donation really adds that faith aspect to all of those who are involved in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul: our neighbors in need, our Vincentians, our parish, our community and even me!”

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action group. It fosters a spirit of faith and trust in God. I noticed more Vincentians coming to daily Mass and increasing their spiritual lives in other ways. That spiritual component is very visible.”

When you give, one-hundred percent of your gift goes directly to help your neighbors in need locally. But your impact is far greater, as Father Elliott has witnessed: “I give because my donation really adds that faith aspect to all of those who are involved in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul: our neighbors in need, our Vincentians, our parish, our community and even me!”



# “Have You Been in a Tornado?”



When someone meets four-year-old Kendrick Meyer for the first time, the first question he will ask you is “Have you been in a tornado?” He has.

Kendrick, his mom and dad and three older brothers (nine-year-old twins Kale and Kelby and six-year-old Kaden) lived in a home on Moore Avenue in Perryville, a road lined with trees and good neighbors. His mother, Kelsey, ran a day care businesses from a small building adjacent to their home. His father works in railroad construction. The boys loved playing in the big yard. After one of those busy days in late February filled with school and homework and sports, Kelsey was giving Kendrick a bath and getting his three older brothers ready for bed when her cell phone started screeching. It was an alert for a tornado warning.

Kelsey grabbed the boys and led them into the basement. Minutes later, an EF4 tornado tore through Perry County, killing a young man and injuring 12 others. Kelsey and her family were unhurt. Others in her community were not.

Kelsey remembers, “When the tornado passed, glass was everywhere and it was dark. We didn’t have power ... We didn’t have shoes; we didn’t have a flashlight; we didn’t have clothes ... and outside, glass everywhere and down powerlines ...”

Imagine losing your house, your business, your cars, those items that mean the most to you and your family. Kelsey remembers good people trying to help her family and her neighborhood by picking up clothes and other items that the tornado had thrown around the street. But she doesn’t know who these people were, or where her belongings ended up.

Several days later, wearing leggings and a jacket she managed to find in the rubble, she and her husband Josh came to a MARC (Multi-Agency Resource Center), which is designed to help victims of natural disasters connect with multiple resources under one roof. That’s where the couple met Bob Ray, who’s a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Perryville (see page 6). Because of your donations, Bob and his members could help families like the Meyers pay for utilities, make first and last month’s rent and security deposits for temporary housing, find immediate food and clothing, and secure storage for those items they could salvage. Even though the Meyers have insurance, they could not access cash quickly.

Today, Josh and Kelsey are rebuilding their house. They talked about moving but their neighbors convinced them to stay. They’ve also secured a structure in town for the day care business, which Kelsey felt important to continue so she could help other families who were struggling to work and rebuild their lives as well, which could take years. As they walk through the work being done on their house, her shirt says what’s in her heart: Pray for Perryville.

“When something like this happens, it is so easy to get behind or get depressed. We are so grateful for the help of everyone who stepped up to help while we were down. Our lives turned upside down through no fault of our own and yet we will right ourselves because of your generosity.”

You might answer Kendrick’s question “Have you ever been in a tornado?” with a “no”, but you have helped kids like Kendrick and their families after the tornado hit.



**“Our lives turned upside down through no fault of our own and yet we will right ourselves because of your generosity.”**



# “How Do You Quit?”



In 1997, the pastor at St. Vincent de Paul parish in Perryville asked Bob Ray and several other parishioners to form a St. Vincent de Paul Conference to help those in need. They got their start by passing a brown bag at the meetings for donations and collecting money from a poor box in the back of church. Bob and several members also used to drive around town picking up furniture for those in need and taking it to a small

distribution center. Twenty years later, Bob and his fellow members are now running their own local Thrift Store to help fund their programs, and they are still driving around town helping those in need. He was one of the first Vincentians to meet Kelsey and Josh after the tornado hit Perryville (see page 4).

“We knew most of the people who’d been hit,” remembers Bob. “None of them were strangers.”

“I’m overwhelmed by your generosity,” gleamed Bob. “We didn’t expect it. We usually are the ones helping others, but this (tornado) would have depleted us. Yet, we are still standing here with open arms, ready to help people when they come in.”





They were basically family because they live in Perryville. We were able to help them with debris removal, utility payments, security deposits on rentals, clothing, food, and storage for the items that survived the storm.”

Conferences in St. Louis and around the Midwest, and donors like you, gave \$60,000 to the relief effort. “I’m overwhelmed by your generosity,” gleamed Bob. “We didn’t expect it. We usually are the ones helping

others, but this (tornado) would have depleted us. Yet, we are still standing here with open arms, ready to help people when they come in.”

The Conference Bob and a few others helped start now has 103 members, and operates its own Thrift Store staffed by volunteers. And Bob shows no signs of slowing down. “How do you quit? If the Lord says (helping others) is what I should do, then I do it. When the Lord says it’s time for me to go, then that’s when I will quit.”

## TORNADO STATS



**35 Families to date**  
helped by SVDP



Tornado started at **7:55pm**  
and ended at **8:57pm**



**\$60,221 in donations**  
to Perryville



Winds reached **180 mph**



Tornado was **six tenths**  
**of a mile wide**



Tornado **traveled**  
**50.4 miles**

## Thrift Store Locations

**Dellwood**  
10052 W. Florissant Ave.  
St. Louis, MO 63136  
(314) 881-6045

**St. Ann**  
10585 St. Charles Rock Rd.  
St. Ann, MO 63074  
(314) 881-6032

**Fenton**  
625 Gravois Rd.  
Fenton, MO 63026  
(314) 881-6041

**St. Charles**  
1069 Regency Parkway  
St. Charles, MO 63303  
(314) 881-6047

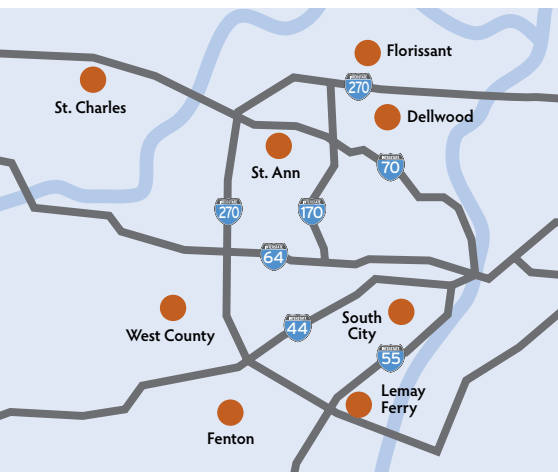
**COMING SOON!**

**Florissant**  
1 Paddock Hills Shopping Ctr.  
Florissant, MO 63033

**South City**  
4928 Christy Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63116  
(314) 881-6043

**Lemay Ferry**  
3924 Lemay Ferry Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63125  
(314) 881-6046

**West County**  
13986 Manchester Rd.  
Ballwin, MO 63011  
(314) 881-6034



ST. LOUIS METROPOLITAN AREA



### SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL OF ST. LOUIS

... HELPING NEIGHBORS STARTS AT HOME ...

Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis  
1310 Papin Street  
Saint Louis, MO 63103  
(314) 881-6000 • svdpst.org

### Our Mission

A Catholic lay organization, joining women and men together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering.



## You Did This Without a Word

When you shop at one of our Thrift Stores, you help us help our neighbors in need. But when the tornado struck Perryville, you went to our stores to donate. You donated clothing. You donated food. You donated money. Most of all, you gave people hope, including us! Look at the smiles on our faces! We carried that hope with us when Vincentians picked up the donations from our Thrift Stores to take directly to the tornado victims. Thank you for supporting our work through our Thrift Stores!

